

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 224

By Weaver

A RESOLUTION directing the department of health to conduct a study concerning the improvement of the funding and provision of services to autistic minors.

WHEREAS, autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others;

WHEREAS, autism is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a "spectrum disorder" that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees;

WHEREAS, in February 2007, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued their Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network autism prevalence report which looked at a sample of 8 year olds in 2000 and 2002, and concluded that the prevalence of autism had risen to one in every 150 American children, and almost one in 94 boys;

WHEREAS, the Autism Society of America (ASA) estimates that the lifetime cost of caring for a child with autism ranges from \$3.5 million to \$5 million, and that the United States is facing almost \$90 billion annually in costs for autism (including costs for research, insurance costs and non-covered expenses, Medicaid waivers for autism, educational spending, housing, transportation, employment, and related therapeutic services and caregiver costs); and

WHEREAS, the ASA asserts that studies show that early diagnosis and intervention lead to significantly improved outcomes for persons with autism and the CDC states that early intervention may be vital in preventing a cascade of problems that may affect later functioning; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE

CONCURRING, that that this general assembly directs the department of health to conduct a study concerning the improvement of the funding and provision of services to autistic minors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the department of health shall report its findings to the members of this general assembly no later than May 1, 2010.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be transmitted to the commissioner of health.